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ABSTRACT

A federally-funded project had as its goal the development of six videotaped instructional modules and a teacher's guide to be used in college French classes, especially in black colleges and universities. The core material consisted of television programs from French-speaking Gabon, Cameroon, and the Ivory Coast. Initially, 45 Howard University faculty and students were surveyed to determine their interest in such a series and their opinions of the form it should take. Late arrival of the television programs and the editing process delayed the project's progress. The results exceeded the initial grant requirements by including seven videotapes instead of six, ranging from 27 to 37 minutes each. The teacher's guide (not included in this document) is a 200-page student/teacher guide with reproducible pages. The project report includes an executive project summary, notes on the project implementation, and appendices consisting of the sequence of project activities, summaries of student group and faculty evaluations of the videotapes, a list of the television programs received, and an overview of the videotapes and guide excerpted from the teacher's guide. (MSE)

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ED253078

FINAL PERFORMANCE REPORT

Grant No. G008201559

"FOREIGN LANGAUGE TRAINING THROUGH INTERNATIONAL MEDIA"

Howard University
Department of Romance Languages

Prepared by
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FL014799

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(Excerpted from Teacher's Guide)

I. PROJECT SUMMARY

"Foreign Language Training Through International Media" had as its goal the development of six videotaped instructional modules and teacher's guide which could be used in university French classes, with specific emphasis on black colleges and universities. The Department of Romance Languages at Howard University served as developer and pilot tester for the modules, for which the core material consisted of television programs from French-speaking nations of West and Central Africa (Gabon and the Ivory Coast).

The project included a formative evaluation in which 45 faculty and students from Howard and the University of the District of Columbia were surveyed concerning their interest in such a series and their opinions of the form it ultimately assumed.

The project was delayed by the late arrival of television programs from the Ivory Coast, which were received nine months into the twelve-month program. Editing of the modules also took longer than expected, spanning a fourand one half month period. Since the teacher's guide could not be written until the content of the videotapes had been precisely determined, the writing of the guide did not get fully underway until August, 1983. Because of the delay, the Project Director requested, and received a three- month extension. Ultimately all work was completed on the project in February, 1984, or seventeen months after the project began.

The project exceeded the initial requirements of the grant, in that seven, not six videotapes were produced, ranging in length from 27 to 37 minutes. Furthermore, the teacher's guide is actually a 200-page student-teacher guide with pages that are xerographically reproducible for easy distribution by teachers to their students.

During the summer of 1984, after the project had been completed, the former Project Director designed an evaluation form for pilot testing of the series as a whole in intermediate and advanced

classes at Howard University. The results will be known in early 1985. It is hoped that the means will be found to disseminate the modules to other universities so that others may benefit from them.

II. PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

"Foreign Language Training Through International Media" included the following components, implemented over a 17-month period:

(1) Faculty-Student Surveys
(2) Consultation and Review of Similar Materials
(3) Obtaining of Television Programs
(4) Production of Pilot Module
(5) Evaluation of Pilot Module
(6) Condensing Television Programs
(7) Production of Series Logo
(8) Production of Seven Videotapes
(9) Drafting and Revision of Teacher's Guide
(10) Pilot testing of the Series

(1) Faculty-Student Surveys

The faculty-student surveys were conducted as focus panels by an outside evaluator and were designed to obtain information useful in selecting television programs and for designing the modules once the programs were obtained. Sessions were conducted at Howard University and included eight faculty and 20 students, all of whom either taught or took French classes. The pool of students selected was carefully balanced for gender, level of French, geographical origin and major. All sessions were tape recorded and a report was produced for each group surveyed.

From the faculty survey, project staff learned that the materials to be developed would probably have to be geared toward the advanced level (levels 3 and 4). Also, it was felt that the tapes might prove useful in motivating students to minor in French and could encourage them to continue taking the language once they had completed their requirements. They also indicated, however, that if the modules were to be used by them with any frequency, that they would be have to easily accessible with a minimum amount of pre-arranging required.

The findings of the student survey were helpful in establishing the nature of the programs to be selected and in providing a detailed description of the desired length, format and methods of utilization of the modules in the classroom (See Appendix II).

(2) Consultation and Review of Similar Materials

As requested by the Department of Education, project staff consulted with various academicians who had been involved in similar projects, including Professor Elbert Dien of Stanford University and Professor Donald Chang of Columbia University. Dr. Dien provided the staff with materials produced during his project, which was designed to develop a similar set of materials for Chinese language classes using television programs from Taiwan. Staff had the opportunity of viewing the tapes produced and had in its possession copies of the accompanying print materials. Dr. Dien also provided advice on pitfalls to avoid and tips to ensure that instructors utilize the materials once developed. He also provided information that would prove helpful in the distribution of the materials susequent to their classroom testing in Howard classrooms. Project staff also screened the films and audio-visual aids which Howard maintains in its language laboratory to ascertain whether there were any stylistic or formatting devices which could be applied to this project.

(3) Obtaining Television Programs

Obtaining the television programs from Gabon posed no particular problem. The programs were selected by project staff and arrived shortly after staff returned from that country. However, obtaining programs from the Ivory Coast proved to be particulary thorny and was ultimately the most difficult aspect of the project.

Prior to the research trip, staff had made contact with USIA here in Washington which alerted the posts about the project and secured their promise to assist in whatever way

possible. Once the staff arrived in these countries, the embassies placed personnel at their disposal and attempts were made to select and have transferred appropriate programming. In Gabon, this worked very smoothly. In Ivory Coast, however, contrary to prior information, extensive renovations were being undertaken in the Department of Television Programming which prevented the programs from being transferred at that time. USIA agreed to intervene and take repsonsibility for seeing that they were transferred and sent to Washington. However, that process was impeded by administrative tie-ups in the Television Department. Ultimately, the Director of Ivoirian Television intervened and the programs were finally sent in June, 1984, nine months after the project had begun.

(4) Production of Pilot Module

The pilot module for the series was produced from the material that was received from Gabon, specifically the dramatic serial entitled "Ou Vas-Tu, Koumba?" (Where Are You Going, Koumba?). The purpose of the pilot was to test the acceptability of the format with both students and faculty. For the pilot, it was decided that the format would include a host, Dr. Keith Q. Warner, Chairman of the Department of Romance Languages at Howard, who would serve as a kind of surrogate, on-screen instructor. Speaking alternately on camera and in voice-over narration, the host narrated and clarified the story line, provided cultural information, presented new vocabulary and quizzes and served as a model for the study of accents.

In addition to the host, the pilot inlcuded condensed versions of the first two installments in the "Ou Vas-Tu, Koumba?" series (nine installments were supplied by Gabon), vocabulary words taken from the dialogue of the story, subtitles (in French) of dialogue that was difficult to understand and a quiz.

Pre-production of the pilot included selecting the excerpts to be included in the module, lifting vocabulary from the story, writing the host's script and researching cultural and demographic information.

Actual production of the pilot lasted two days and included videotaping the host. He was postitioned stationery against a backdrop with an African motif. Speaking alternately in French and English, he read the script from a teleprompter.

Post-production involved editing the pilot: combining the host segments with the selected excerpts from the original series, and with the screen graphics depicting vocabulary and quizzes. The pilot was assembled at WHMM-TV studios at Howard University.

(5) Evaluation of the Pilot Module

The pilot was evaluated by Howard and UDC* faculty in May, 1983. (School had recessed by that time, so the students were surveyed in September, 1983) The faculty liked the pilot and basically believed that it would be used as supplementary and not as core material. General recommendations included: more subtitling under the difficult-to-understand dialogue; shortening the on-screen questions and including longer ones on the guide; emphasizing the culture more using screen graphics, including maps, and keeping the modules to within 30 minutes. (See Appendix II for more detailed description of recommendations).

(6) Condensing Television Programs

Significant time was devoted to the screening of the 16 programs to determine how best to excerpt material. Priority was given to maintaining the story line, using dialogue that was understandable, grammatical and which did not move too rapidly, and dialogue which contained relevant vocabulary and grammatical structures, all the while bearing in mind the need to keep each to a length of approximately 30 minutes. After screening the 16 programs, the Project Director and Curriculum Developer decided to develop seven modules: four from the Gabonese seres "Ou Vas-Tu, Koumba?"; two from the Ivoirian series, "Le Train Special de Son Excellence," (His Excellency's Special Train); and one from an untitled public affairs program where leading citizens discussed the impact of television on the Ivory Coast. (Commercials also included)

*The University of the District of Columbia

(7) Production of Series Logo

A logo, or opening, for the series was produced from a montage of stock footage obtained from The World Bank and from the television programs we received from the Ivory Coast. Music was lifted from one of those programs and was used as the program theme.

(8) Production of the Seven Modules

As with the pilot, production of the seven modules was divided up into pre-production, production and post-production.

Pre-production for the modules involved writing the scripts for the narrator (in French and English), assembling different set backdrops for the different programs, commissioning the design of maps and illustrations, renting the camera and lighting equipment, hiring a crew, and writing the scripts onto the teleprompter.

Production included the actual taping of the host segments and his voice-over narration.

Post-production included editing together the programs: combining the host segments with the excerpts selected from the television programs, the on-screen vocabulary, subtitles, quizzes, credits and series logo.

(9) Drafting and Revising the Teacher's Guide

Although a sample guide was written to accompany the pilot, writing for the overall guide began with the pre-production of the videotapes. Prior to that time, it would have been impossible to develop the chapters for the guide.

The guide was designed by the Curriculum Developer and the Project Director and was revised by a native French speaker. The 200 page guide includes an 11-page introduction in English which gives the following: a synopsis of each program and a rundown of the segments found in each videotape; a guide to the manual itself; and an instruction plan. Following the introduction, there are seven chapters, each corresponding to one of the seven videotapes. (A module was defined as the videotape plus the corresponding print chapter.) Each chapter is written in French and contains a synopsis of the story, grammar exercises, comprehension exercises, pre- and post-screening vocabulary worksheets, suggestions for skits, role-playing, etc. and quizzes. The

appendix includes full transcripts of the dialogue contained in excerpted portions of the videotapes.

After the guide had been written in first draft, and was revised by a native speaker of French, it was reviewed by all project staff for errors in spelling, accent marks and content.

(10) Pilot Testing of the Series

Subsequent to the completion of the project, the Project Director developed an evaluation instrument to test the series during the fall semester of 1984 at Howard University. The results of this evaluation have not yet been compiled.

APPENDIX A

Sequence of Project Activities

SEQUENCE OF PROJECT ACTIVITIES

SEPT. 1, 1982	Grant awarded
SEPT. 20,	Grant award documents received at Howard University
SEPT. 15,	Correspondence sent to Ivory Coast and Gabon
OCT. 5	USIA agrees to assist project and sends our cables requesting that embassies provide facilitative assistance
OCT. 8	Screening of other instructional programs begins
OCT. 21	Faculty survey session held
NOV. 1	Positive response received from African television officials, via USIA
NOV. 17	First student survey session held
NOV. 18	Second student survey session held
NOV. 10	Cables sent comerically to African television officials informing them of dates of impending visit by HU staff
NOV. 22	Screening of other programs continues
DEC. 5	Travel to Ivory Coast and Gabon -- 16 hours of television programming selected
DEC. 22	Consultation with Professor Elbert Dien, Stanford U.
JAN. 21 1983	Tapes received from Gabon via diplomatic pouch
JAN 26	Tapes screened -- preliminary selection made for pilot
JAN 28	First of many telephone contacts made with US embassy in Ivory Coast in effort to expedite shipment of tapes
FEB 10	Gabonese tapes sent to New York for scan conversion
FEB 28	Gabonese tapes returned from New York
MAR	Script for pilot developed; Attempts continue to obtain programs from the Ivory Coast
APR	Pilot produced and edited
APR	Pilot tested with faculty from Howard and the Universit of the District of Columbia
MAY	In-person conversation with Director of Ivoirian Television in Washington in which a promise to secure tapes is obtained
JUN	Ivory Coast programs arrive
JULY	Tapes from Ivory Coast sent to New York for scan conversion

JULY		Screening completed for all programs, preliminary selections made
AUG		Pre-production for modules one and two. Chapters for modules one and two are begun
SEP		Production and post-production for modules one and two. Scripts for modules three through seven completed. HU and UDC students surveyed re: pilot.
OCT		Production of modules three through seven. Chapters three and four of guide are drafted. Chapters one and two are revised.
NOV		Editing proceeds for modules three and four. Introduction and lesson plan for guide drafter. Chapters five six and seven of guide are written. Transcriptions of dialogue from the modules are begun. Chapters three and four are revised.
DEC		Editing continues form modules five, six and seven. Chapters five, six and seven are revised. Transcriptions continue. Project staff reviews guide for errors.
JAN	1984	Editing of modules five, six and seven completed. Guide is corrected in word processor. Negotiations continue for guide's publication. Three sets of the tapes are duplicated and given to Howard.
FEB		Guide published.

APPENDIX B

Evaluations

SUMMARY OF EXPLORATORY FOCUS GROUPS WITH STUDENTS FOR FOREIGN LANGUAGE TRAINING USING INTERNATIONAL MEDIA

November 23, 1982

CAROLE GAILLARD WATT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On November 17th and 18th, 1982, two focus groups were conducted with Howard University students. The groups consisted of about seven French students each, ranging from level II to level IV. Of the fourteen students, four of them were either French majors or minors.

The objectives of the focus groups were to gain insight into the students' perceptions of thier present French courses, their perceptions of Africa and to test their receptivity to the concept of using video-taped television programs from French-speaking West Africa.

Students were selected on the basis of their availability, the region of the country where they grew up, the level and class of French in which they were enrolled.

The following is a summary of the issues that were discussed in the groups.

Reasons for Taking a Language

The students exhibited a desire to obtain world unity through learning a language. This appeared to spring form altruistic feelings rather than political ones. This in addition to broadening one's self, appeared to be a major reason for taking a language. Mention was made of the career opportunities in fields using languages as a primary tool. It was felt that this field was a good one for Blacks since it was not yet saturated.

Teaching of French

Students definately want more from their French classes. They expect to be able to communicate effectively with francophones after taking four levels and this is not happening with most. The methods most appreciated were: conversations, and classes held in French only; and reading French newspapers or magazine articles. The latter was preferred over reading stories because of the factual knowledge that they obtained from the articles.

Perceptions of own language abilities

The students' ideas of what was most important in acquiring a language seemed to differ according to thier own personal difficulties with the skills. Speaking appeared to be the most difficult for the students to master. Some felt that it was impossible to separate grammar, vocabulary and comprehension. When asked what could be done to increase their aptitude in speaking, they responded that more conversation was the key. They felt that listening to conversations was valuable also.

Perceptions of Africa

Most students taking French were aware of the countries where French was spoken. It was thought, however, that the other students on campus were unaware of the geographical distribution of the language. Although cognisant of the increasing inter-dependence of Africa and the United States, the students did not feel that this would affect

them directly.

Two extreme viewpoints were expressed when asked about their feelings with regard to African students. One group saw them as domineering and threatening, while the other recognized a contribution that was being made, culturally, intellectually and politically, by thier presence.

May felt that it was important to learn about African cultures because it broadened the view that Blacks have about themselves. It is important for a Black American to be able to recognize that Africa is a continent and not a country with a homogeneous culture. Knowing about African cultures was deemed essential to knowing about Black people because of the atavistic influence on the literature and on behavior or customs.

Using a Language in Careers

The students, in general felt that their careers could be broadened by having a second language though most did not have plans for it to be primary in their careers. They recognized that business ventures could become international in scope with a second language.

Perceptions of African TV

In general, the students thought that TV in Africa would be almost non-existant or mostly comprised of translated programs from Europe and America.

Types of programs students would choose

When asked what kinds of programs they would like to see as part of the learning modules, (presuming that programs similar to those produced in America were available), these comments were made:

"programs that show the tpyical life of students"

"soap operas"

"something with the slang of the country"

"teen agers"

"simple scenarios about our peers"

"news programs -- later on, after we become accustomed to it"

"weather, sports"

" programs with conversation as opposed to someone giving the weather report"

"comedy"

"game shows"

"real life situations"

"children's programs"

At the suggestions of presenting a typical serial like "Fame" in 15 minute segments, the students had these suggestions to make:

" Yes, and have it (the script) in a book form. And first learn the vocabulary, the slang; learn about the characters and then show the film. Then you have a background."

"Give the kids a pre-lesson."

"Have the students view the film and then, for homework, have them summarize the story."

If they could learn more about African cultures, they would be interested in current events, cultures, history of African nations. It was felt by some that learning about Africa in French classes was instrumental in making the language more meaningful, while others thought that the culture and history of Africa should be reserved for courses dealing specifically with these subjects.

Infusion into the curriculum

There were differing opinions on how these learning modules could be used in such a way as to keep the students' interest. One group of students felt that it would be too disruptive to divide the story up into segments, or to provide an explanation of a grammatical point in the middle of the action. It was suggested that the program be first run in its entirety and then broken into segments for instructional purposes, or vice versa. Another group felt that the whole lesson should last no longer than 20 minutes. Some felt that the film should be dealt with just as a chapter would be treated: introduction of the lesson, view the film, and homework assignment. It would take one whole class period.

The students expressed an interest in having these tapes used on an elementary level - using pre-school videotapes. Cue cards were readily accepted by one group, to keep the student moving at the same pace with the production. They felt the cards would keep the student from getting lost and becoming discouraged. Another group felt that inserting cue cards would detract from the interest generated by the film.

Greatest benefit of this concept

The students made these comments when asked what they saw as the greatest benefit of this concept:

"more vocabulary"

"seeing and hearing is more beneficial than just hearing"

"the pace is the normal pace instead of being slowed down for our benefit"

"emphasis is switched from writing to conversation"

Greatest drawback of this concept

The greatest drawback centered around availability and adequate equipment with which to used the videotapes. They voiced the concern of having the monitor sufficiently large and clear so that everyone could see it.

Summary

The students were very pleased that we had come to them for thier opinions. They felt the concept was interesting though most did not feel that it would motivate more students to take French. Overall, they were pleased with the fact that they would be learning about African cultures while learning the language.

REPORT ON
EXPLORATORY FOCUS GROUPS
WITH FACULTY (FLTIM)

Faculty's Attitudes About Teaching a Language

General questionning of the group about the teaching methods used most often revealed that on the introductory level, professors used text books along with the language laboratory. Grammar classes were taught straight from the text book. In intensive courses, some professors had used video, but had discovered that the tapes were not oriented towards illustrating specific gramatical points, making it difficult to integrate them into the course.

They stated that an advantage of the present method was that the students felt more secure using a text, but all felt that given more time, they would vary their methods of presentation more.

Most of the professors agreed that there was very little time to be creative with the courses they taught. Although all felt that video was an asset, they expressed the fact that it usually had to be treated as an adjunct to the required curriculum and therefore was not used because of time and curriculum limitations.

At least one professor of the elementary level felt that pictures served to reinforce the learning to a great degree. He was a strong advocate of combining visual stimuli with the written word to improve both passive and active skills. This professor had used the "Ensemble" series and was pleased with it. It was agreed that video or other a/v materials could be very useful on every level -- elementary, to motivate, stimulate interest and build a solid foundation; and more advanced, to build confidence and improve comprehension skills.

It was expressed that much of the current video material available to them through the a/v center did not illustrate a specific gramatical point or did not correspond to the points that needed to be stressed as necessary and required parts of the curriculum. (The professor was referring to the full length features, at this po[illegible])

Ideally, the professors would like to present the language in a way that would be very relevant to the lives of the students. Material should attract the students. It was felt by some that many students had a mental block or a general disinclination to learning the language because it was a "colonial language". It was expressed that culturally relevant material would be helpful. Tapes depicting scenes with Blacks from francophone countries was considered to be culturally relevant. At this juncture, the professors expressed divergent opinions as to the relevance and importance of seeing all black scenes in francophone countries. There was more the inclination towards having scenes with students of all races speaking French.

Elementary level teachers who felt that they were dealing with the acquisition of the language first, the geographical distribution of the language and the cultural implication, second, placed less importance on the cultural relevance of the material. Their primary concern was with providing materials that would capture the spririt of the student so that they would be more willing to put the necessary effort into learning the language.

Seeing French "in action" with people doing things that the students do every day, was cited as important. Simple scenarios, such as kids going to buy jeans together and speaking French were given as examples. An overdose of video should be avoided, however, it was decided. Rather it should be balanced with the other methods, i.e. text books, repitition and conversation. "Ensemble", it was felt, adequately incorporated both the video and the written teaching methods.

The ideal video production would have segments that dealt with units of learning, weather expressions, for example, where the vocabulary was standard. This would allowthe teacher to substitute the video for whatever method they would normally use. If the subject was of a general nature, it could be fit into the program with no problem.

Several professors expressed that the ideal way to adapt a production such as "Ensemble" to a more advanced learning module, would be to illustrate more complex situations, dealing with compound and future tenses, etc. The treatment of the material could be adapted to the level as well. How to use the material, according the the type of lesson desired and the level of the class could be included in the print material that accompanies the tapes.

Faculty Perceptions of Students' Attitudes Towards Languages

The professors agreed that their students are cognisant of the need of a foreign language in their careers although many are taking the language primarily because it is required by the school. It was stated that the students probably feel somewhat foolish because they are unable to express themselves as they feel they should, and because forming the words, i.e. using their mouths in a fashion to which they are unaccustomed makes them feel uncomfortable. Seeing people shape the words in a video production would aid them in overcoming this malaise.

Faculty Reactions to the Concept

Content and language level of the TV programs to be used were the first concerns expressed by many of the faculty in reaction to the concept of using TV programs. Some expressed disappointment that the modules would be primarily geared towards the advanced levels. They stated that the beginning level, the formative period when the foundation of the language is being laid, was the ideal period for motivating and for generating enthusiasm among the students by presenting the material graphically. The perceived value of the video TV programs on the advanced level is that it is totally captivating and forces the student to figure out what is happening. Some felt that this could only be effective if the students have a firm background in the language. Others felt that the exposure alone would be beneficial relying on the teacher to determine the depth to which the segment would be studied.

It was expressed that presenting these modules on the third and fourth level was too late to serve as a motivational tool since the academic structure of the department is such that students of level three and four would have to repeat the same material if they should later decide to major in the language. It was generally accepted that the modules could influence students to minor in the language. It could be a motivational tool if it capitalized on the use of the language in various careers. The video modules could "keep them" in the language and would add a new, popular dimension to the department.

Types of Programs

A concern for bringing in quality programming was brought up, with an emphasis on avoiding sexism and violence. However, on the whole, the professors conceded that these elements existed in society and that the students related to this type of programming because they are accustomed to it. The emphasis was to teach the language and to find a happy medium in the selection in the types of programming.

Documentaries, news programs, weather, sports, soap operas were suggested as types of programs. It was felt that news and sports programs would be interesting if the news was exciting. Soap operas were favored because they depicted everyday situations and would probably touch on elements of the students' lives. Cartoon and children's shows were mentioned as good choices. Some fairy tales have been used in the classroom very successfully. They became

for the students to act out familiar stories using the language. Commercials were cited as being ideal because of their length and fast pace.

Elements of the Modules

The elements of the modules should remain very flexible so that the instructors could experiment, but a suggested plan or guide on how to use the materials would be a welcomed resource. A workbook for the students should have built in progression to help the professors pace the use of the modules. Flexibility would be imporatnt also in the use of the video tapes on various levels. The written material could have suggestions on how the manual could be used on various levels to achieve different objectives, i.e. as a springboard for conversaton or as a grammatical insturctional tool.

It was felt that the culture would be transmitted naturally through the medium of the TV programs, so that it need not be emphasized particularly Cultural differences could be used as a springboard for discussion. The print material, it was mentioned, could contain facts about the culture that would aid in providing the students with a better understanding of what is taking place on the screen.

Conversation could be emphasized most, giving the students the opportuni to see natural responses. It would follow that grammar could be stresse by listening and studying the conversation. At an earlier point in the discussion, mention was made of using graphic representations

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of the concepts emphasized in each module -- cue cards or words on the screen. The sentences used in the programs could appear on the screen at intervals.

The faculty agreed that the modules should be versitile enough so that they could be used both in the classroom and in the a/v center. An operator would be necessary if the modules were brought to the classroom.

Accessibility to the modules, giving the professors the flexibility to use them two to three times a week was the key to the frequency of usage by the professors. Accessibility was considered equally important as content. If there was not a long reservaton time required, and no undue conflict with usage, they could perceive no difficulties in making the modules an integral part of the curriculum. Since there is some flexibility in thedesign of their curriculum, i.e. the professors have a free hand at selecting the method of presentation, they could make room for these modules if the logistics could be simplified. If they were not able to use the modules on a regular basis, at least 20 minutes per class period, they would feel the same hesitation to use them as they feel for the the materials presently available to them. Fifteen to twenty minutes a period, at least twice a week, appeared to be the frequency and duration of usage preferred by the professors.

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Faculty's Perceptions of Students' Receptivity

It appears to the professors the athe students are aware of their African roots and that there is an identificaiton with students from francophone countries. No professors had detected a reticence or prdjudice on the part of the students with regard to African countries. In addition, the professors implied that their students were aware of the geopraphical distributio.. of the language simply through contact with francophone students in the university.

SUMMARY

The faculty showed great enthusiasm in the project and seemed encouraged that an attempt was being made to bring culturally relevant material to the classroom at Howard. They felt that the overall educational and motivational effect of the programs would be positive and thought that the students would probably be enthusiastically receptive.

Their main concerns were intensity of the language used in the programs, the versatility of the modules, and the flexibility that they would have in reserving the materials.

The professors were very curious about the next step and expressed a desire to continue to offer their input on the project.

REPORT ON

FOCUS GROUPS WITH

HOWARD UNIVERSITY FACULTY

AND

UNIVERSITY OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA FACULTY

ON THE

FIRST MODULE

IN THE

AFRICAN VIDEOTAPE PROJECT

by

Carole Gaillard Watt

June, 1983

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MODERATOR'S GUIDE

INTRODUCTION

On May 12 and on May 24, 1983, two focus groups were held to test the first of six modules in the African Videotape Project. The first group was with the faculty in the Department of Romance Languages at Howard University and the second, with Romance Language faculty at the University of the District of Columbia.

The objective of the groups was to acertain:

- The professors' appreciation of the videotape as a tool to teach the language;
- The professors' appreciation of the videotape as a tool to infuse African culture into the curriculum;
- The changes the professors would make in the technical aspects of the videotape;
- The changes the professors would make in the method of presenting the language and the culture;
- How the professors would use the videotape in their classroom.

STATEMENT OF LIMITATIONS

The focus group approach seeks to develop insight and direction rather than provide quantitatively precise or absolute measures. Because of the limited number of respondents involved, and the recruitment procedures, this research must be considered in a qualitative frame of reference.

Verbatim comments, where they are included, have been used to convey the tenor of the session.

The reader may find sections that seem erroneous. When such data appears in the context of findings from the participant's point of view, it should be considered as valid data. That is, the participant may be misinformed or be making an error in judgement. The reader should interpret that as useful data and resolve to set the record straight through an educational process in the marketing or presentation of the product.

This study cannot be considered reliable or valid in the statistical sense, since it is not possible to replicate the recruitment or the actual conduct of the session. This research is meant to provide a first step in determining knowledge, awareness, attitudes and opinions about services, concepts or products.

SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS

OF FOCUS GROUP WITH

HOWARD UNIVERSITY FACULTY

SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS OF
FOCUS GROUP WITH FACULTY AT HOWARD UNIVERSITY

On May 12, 1983, the first of six modules in the African Videotape Project was tested by faculty members of the Department of Romance Languages at Howard University. Eleven professors attended, three of whom were teachers of a language other than French, but had a working knowledge of the language.

After encountering some logistical difficulties at Howard, the group began at 10:45am. The professors were given some background about the project and were told how the session was going to be conducted. Because of the technical difficulties, however, there was not adequate time to complete an oral evaluation of the print materials. Each professor took a questionnaire and a copy of the print materials and were asked to leave the completed questionnaire and their comments in Dr. Warner's office at their earliest convenience.

The following is a summary of the comments that were made on the videotape in the evaluation session.

OVERALL REACTION

The professors were asked first to give a general impression of the videotape.

> "It has great possibilities."(many agreed)
>
> "Well, I have a problem ...basically we're going to teach French with that, and there are many segments that I, myself, did not understand. If you have to subtitle everything,...I have a problem with that since this is supposed to be an audio-visual experience."(Ffaff)
>
> "I thought this was not...a primary tool, but something to supplement the lesson."
>
> "I would use it as homework, myself."

Many of the professors expressed that they would prefer to use this as supplementary material.

HOST'S DELIVERY

The overall impression of the host's presentation was favorable.

> "I thought he had great presence. He had that quizical kind of look that made him not stiff."(Luce)

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"I thought his pace was good."(Smiley)

"His voice was very clear...very relaxed."

Some professors felt that shooting the host from a single angle had advantages. It was felt that he should be talking directly to the audience and that movement would distract their attention.

"He's formally teaching, so there is no need to change shots or positions. It's a straight forward position, talking directly to the audience."

"...once the student is in established contact with the speaker, they get more involved in what he is explaining. If he moves around, it will distract their attention...."

However, there was some dissention on this point and several comments were made to improve the host's devlivery.

"I thought he should have been shot from different angles....His head was somewhat cocked and it was not as comfortable a position as it should have been. If the camera had moved...not that he had to move, it would have come across better."(Smith)

"It would add some liveness, too -- not just an 'image figée'."

"I don't think it would be disturbing to have the camera take several shots from different angles. When you're teaching, you move....I found that it was very static....He was tremendously bothered by the light...his eyes--the way he addressed the camera. I'm a little disturbed if its WHMM that has done that -- that they were not able to get better lighting qualities. I thought he was a little stiff. But taking into consideration...the camera condition, the studio condition and the lights, I understand why he was the way he was. If those elements were taken into consideration..., his delivery would be much better."(Ffaff)

There was total agreement on the suitablity of the setting. When asked what changes they would make in the narrated portions, mention was made of the slow pace the narrator used in English. This brought out a few comments about the pace that was appropriate in the French as well.

"He wasn't talking too fast, but he wasn't talking too slowly. It was a natural (cadence)."(Luce)

"(The cadence) was natural, adequate for the students. They have to have something they can understand."(Smiley)

"It sounded a little slow."(Ffaff)

"From the point of view of the teacher, from someone who has mastered the language, the pace would appear to be slow. However, he's addressing the students, so I think it was perfect....You have to give the students time to digest what they are hearing."(Christophe)

Asked if it would sound natural to native French speakers, it was agreed that the pace was slow and unnatural. It should be pointed out that in our initial groups held with the students, one of their primary complaints was the slow, unnatural cadence that was used by all of their professors. They were very adamant about hearing the language at a normal pace.

TECHNICAL QUALITY OF THE WHMM PRODUCED FOOTAGE

When asked to give their impressions of the technical quality of the portions produced at WHMM, many of the comments that came out referred to the African footage and are not relevant to this evalaution. There was a comment about wanting to see a lead in that would give the name of the director and other information about its production. This professor (Ffaff) would also like to see in the lead whether or not the producer and cinematographer of the African footage were Africans or Europeans.

> "At the very opening of the film (referring to the African footage), the titling there was very poor."
>
> "Maybe another footage can be added at the beginning to replace the African footage and additional information can be added...."

Subtitling

The professors were very concerned about the subtitling and were anxious to make inquiries and offer suggestions. In general, because of the poor voice quality of the African footage and because of the accent, they felt there was a need for more subtitling, although they conceded that this could defeat the purpose of the module as an audio-visual tool.

> "There were some African names that needed to be spelled out for the students to see. We're pretty much ready to listen to 'Bouballa', but the students would not know what the syllables mean or how that relates to the sentence -- whether it's the French part of the African part. And I think if they see it, they would know that Bouballa is a name and they can go on to the French."(Smiley)
>
> "At first you have a couple of subtitles, then they disappear at some of the times when they were badly needed. Then later on they were more consistent, but not always...."
>
> "Did you do so, so that the students would also have the opportunity to listen to the language without the subtitles? But as we all agree that it is difficult to listen to the French with the African intonnation, I think that at that level, it would be good to have everything subtitled except for the very simple situations."(Luce)
>
> "As soon as you have more than a few words, I don't think the students can understand it...We also had difficulty understanding it."

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The need for subtitles raised the question of whether or not this was the best module for the purposes they hope to serve.

> "If we want the students to be able to understand some French without having to subtitle everything, then is this particular module one tha we want, or should we look at another module? Or if we are going to subtitle everything, how are we going to use this module and which wa would it best serve our purposes?"(Smith)

> "It is an interesting film, but if our purpose is to teach the language,...then this film doesn't help because of the accent,... and difficulty in comprehension....If it is for the cultural aspects, the it is fine."(Baneth)

> "I think its a very good tool to supplement a course, to give the various aspects of the African culutre in Gabon. But I have serious problems in terms of using it as a tool to teach the language. I'm not going to be chauvinistic and say that the only accent which is proper in French is the Parisien one, but there is some limit."(Ffaf

Asked again how they felt about using the African accent to teach the language, they responded:

> "Well, as I've said, I would use it as homework, not to teach the language in the classroom."

> All agreed.

Blend of Program Elements

All professors were in agreement in their approval of the blend of the various program elements including the story cuts, cue cards, switching from narrator to story, etc.

> "The pacing was good."

A suggestion was made that the story begin with the visit from the "commis", after showing Koumba in the fields, enjoying his work. This would establish Koumba's personality, and from that point, the story of t dowry could be introduced. Many of the professors expressed that the cut to Koumba and the "commis" was somewhat distracting and created some confusion.

> "It is distracting. I wasn't sure what was happening."

> "You can switch things around...when you have the 'commis' speaking with the young man, it would have been better in the beginning when you were presenting him as loving his work and the village life, and then from there on you could introduce the story of the dowry."

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"We didn't know who Koumba was."

"For a while I thought it was a completely different episode."

"It would make sense that we know from the start that he doesn't like city life. He wants to stay in the country, but because of the dowry he will have to go to town....It would be better to present it as background to the story."

INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNIQUES

The Use of English and French

There was some debate about the merits or demerits of using only French or combining the two languages as was done in the module. The issue of using the module on the various levels was brought up in contrast to the advantage of getting as much good French out of the module as possible.

Those teachers who presented an argument for changing it to all French raised these points:

"The teacher can intervene and explain...You can reach a middle ground where the French would not be as sophisticated....I don't want to say that Dr. Warner's French is the best in the module but at least they will hear some French that they can understand. Why deprive them of that....If it's an audio-visual experience, I don't see why we don't try to have as much French as possible (referring to the use of English to explain vocabulary.)" (Ffaff)

"For (levels) three and four it's adequate...(For the advanced classes), it's a bit easy....So I don't know what to do."(Baneth)

"What purpose is the purpose of the film? If it is an audio-visual experience, I don't see why we don't try to have everything in French." (Ffaff)

Those who were in favor of keeping it as it was cited the following reasons:

"I think to put it in French completely would be limiting to the level."(Smith)

"I think we should think of this module as supplementary material so the ...introduction in English...won't do any harm even for more sophisticated students....It's reassuring to the students. If you explain it all in French and they don't understand it, they just get discouraged."(Luce)

"There is also the segment of vocabulary. How are you, by simple using French, going to explain these words?"

Vocabulary

Some of the professors seemed to want more attention given to the vocabulary. For instance, with a word like "arriere grand-pere", the rest of the family relationships could have been added. The professors were asked if they would like to see this on the videotape.

> "I would think so. The family relationships -- all of those could have been done in a sort of capsule. You could explain what a 'gendre' was and all of that."

Or with the word "manioc", other foods mentioned in the film could have been added.

> "The foods and the fruits and the vegetables, the eating habits could have been in another capsule."

It was the concensus, however, that no additional time should be given to this. Perhaps this could be done by projecting a picture of the vegetable or fruit and in the case of the family relationships, illustrations of the family, would be more striking for the student.

> "I think it would be good to have it (illustrations of the foods, etc.) in the printed matter AND in the videotape...there is an image of the food so the students will have an idea of what they are learning."

Even those professors who had felt that the mix of English and French was good, agreed that with the pictures, they would do it all in very simple French. It was agreed that the print material should have more extensive vocabulary and illustrations as well, but that pictures to accompany the words on the videotape would be welcomed.

> "If it can be put on the same segment without adding more time. You can project it along with the written words. But if it means that you have to have more time, it would not be worth it."

Grammar

None of the teachers felt that it was necessary to add gramatical points to the videotape.

Testing Techniques

It was agreed that two or more questions should be added to the videotape.

> "I felt also that something more was coming. But I think you can ask as many questions as you wish in the print material." (Jaime)

One professor felt that it would have been better to give the answers to the questions in the same manner given in the videotape instead of rewording the answer.

"I feel that it would have been better to go back and give the same answers given in the film...because that's what the students will be listening for. Not reword them, and say: This is one possibility.', but give the actual answer stated in the film."(John Smith)

It was mentioned also that subtitles should be added to the portion of the story that was recapped to give the answer.

"If we had those in subtitles, then we would just bring the subtitles in the answer. Then the student would not have to give all of it, but they would have a choice."(Luce)

It was felt that the teacher should be in charge of controling the video to give the students adequate time to respond to the questions on the screen.

"I think there was adequate time if we use John's method, if they can repeat whatever the things were. But if they had to form one of those indirect questions, they wouldn't be able to."(Smiley)

CULTURAL ELEMENTS

The professors thought the the presentation of the cultural elements was adequate with some suggestions for additions.

"I would have added a little bit more about Gabonese protocol...the kissing cheek thing....I'd rather not make it longer....Just as he points out (various points to notice) he could also say 'Look at how the sister and brother greet'" (Smiley)

"Also, if you make it too long, between segments of the film, you kind of lose momentum."(Luce)

"One thing should be emphasised in the begining of the tape...is that this is not a representation of all the African ethnic groups or cultures, but that certain elements within the Gabonese life are to be found all over Africa. Gabon is not a microcosim of Africa. Also, you have to specify that this is a Gabonese accent....It has to be emphasized. We cannot say the 'African accent'. (Ffaff)

The professor would play a key role in the presentation of cultural elements also:

"I think it's almost imposible to go over every aspect of the cultural elements shown on the film. I think that room should be left for the teacher. If he or she has prepared him or herself, then he or she should be able to answer some questions."(Christophe)

When asked if they would like to see additional modules from the Koumba series, they responded that perhaps one more would be good so that the students could see what happened to Koumba when he went to the city.

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Most of their comments, however, turned to the quality of the footage from Africa. They felt that a teaching module would be much more effective if they had footage of good quality.

> "I'm rather distracted by the poor quality of the cinematographic elements, and I'm...struck by the fact that Gabon is spending a lot of money making a feature film. It has made the biggest film ever made in Africa...about the Gabonese head of state. But then, when they are doing educational TV, they are not spending any money. I'm struck by that discrepancy. When you want to advertise the leader, you spend four million dollars, but when you do educational -- it's very amateur. But it presents the culture."

> "What about the movies? Couldn't we get something from the movies?....Even the actors are less than convincing. You feel that they have not been trained to be actors probably."

> "I would like to see -- this is an excellent idea, but I think that what we want to get across to the students would come across much more effectively if we had footage from Africa of good quality."

> "The American students are TV viewers. They are quite sophisticated. By presenting them with such a poor quality picture, I'm sure...that would tend to turn them off."(Christophe)

> "What I would add to that is that in a way, this is more genuine because they are made on the spot by native crew and all that. But the students are not going to be impressed by the genuine Gabonese movie. They're going to be much more impressed by whoever does it, if its good quality."(Luce)

With a general agreement that the quality would be a big issue with the students, the professors conceded, however, that it was better than having nothing to offer.

> "We're talking about having nothing, or next to nothing. Since we have so very little, and this is one good attempt....It would take the students out of the books that we use and give them something else to look forward to."(Smiley)

> "In the printed material, we should state that this is not representative of African films. Because if people associate this type of series with what is done in Africa, that's not representative. It is very amateurish." (Ffaff)

One professor suggested that the story cast a negative light on the African family. That point was countered by the idea that Gabonese family life should not be Americanized and "Hollywoodized" for the sake of greater acceptance if this was to be a cultural teaching tool. It should, however be pointed out to the students that although there are certain cultural elements that are true to Gabonese culture, the friction that exists in this family is somewhat fictionalized. These problems do exist in some Gabonese families, and in families of other countries in Africa, but as we

can surmise by the judgement in favor of Bouballa, it is viewed by many as a problem and not as acceptable behavior.

The professors stated that the teacher should be responsible to a large degree for pointing out the differences in accent and that sufficient attention was given to the differences in accent on the videotape.

INFUSION INTO THE CURRICULUM

Most of the professors stated that they would use the module as suplementary material.

> "Yes, I would use it. But simply as supplementary material....If I wanted the students to see something of Gabonese culture."
>
> "Not to teach grammar....It would merely be an adjunct -- mainly for cultural or to satisfy student interest in Africa."

It was thought that the videotape was too long to be used in a 50 minute class, but not if it were to be used as part of homework. It was too long considering the difficulties one experiences in getting the equipment.

> "I would personnally eliminate the vocabulary explanation and have this more extensively done in the written part."
>
> "But it's good for them the see the words...and trying to let it sink into them..."
>
> "And it gives them something to listen for."
>
> "I think it works best when its 10 or 15 minutes at the maximum. Because if the people are not here on time, or if you want to prepare the people, to immerse them in the culutre or whatever before, you cannot do that in a half hour. And then, if you have to cut it, why not make smaller segments anyway. You would not have an arbitrary cutting. You would have something that makes sense."

There was some discussion about the logistics and methods of using the module. A suggestion was made by one professor that continuous or previously scheduled viewings be held in the language laboratory. Another suggestion was to show the videotape during one class period and reserve the questions for the following class meeting. These ideas should perhaps be included in the instructors manual as suggestions for use.

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WRAP UP

A few final questions were asked as the professors were preparing to leave.

The professors found the word "module" to be acceptable and "modern".

There were positive reactions to the name "Images Africaines" and "Images d'Afrique", but no new ideas surfaced since all of the professors were in a hurry to leave.

SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS

OF FOCUS GROUP WITH

UNIVERSITY OF DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA FACULTY

SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS OF
FOCUS GROUP WITH FACULTY
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

A second test of the module was performed with professors of the Romance Language Department at the University of the District of Columbia on May 24, 1983. Three professors, including the head of the department, one student and one Gabonese student were present for the evaluation.

The session began with an introduction of the project by Stephanie Dailey, Project Director and Producer. The videotape was viewed and followed by completion of the videotape questionnaire. A questionnaire for the print materials was distruibuted to gather the groups ideas about the elements they felt necessary in the teacher's guide. No comments were elicited before the producer left so that objectivity could be achieved.

The following is a summary of the comments made by the group on the videotape.

OVERALL REACTION

The overall impression of the videotape by this group was unquestionnably positive. Much of their appreciation came from the fact that they found the cultural contribution to the classroom to be invaluable.

> "There's a wealth of cultural information to be explored."(Fallon)
>
> "My impression was...when the students see it, if they haven't been there, they're going to get a culture shock. If they have been there...they're going to know that this is the real thing. They will understand the culture and they'll appreciate it."(Sims)
>
> "It will give them the right appreciation of Africa."
>
> "I think it will be so helpful,...and if they can elaborate with a student who has been there."
>
> (Gabonese citizen)"I'm so happy that they will know exactly what is going on. Some young men want to change...Some people want to keep the traditions."

The professors were asked to rate the videotape briefly as an instructional tool. Some mentioned that they felt that there was much work left to do, but the impression was given that the work needed to turn this videotape into an instructional tool would

have to be part of the print materials.

> "There is still so much work to do -- but I think it's good."
>
> "I liked it. As a student of French, I see that I could have learned from it. If I had had this when I was a student, I would have been very pleased. I would have wanted the written exercises. I'd want the vocabulary introduced....I'd want to be tested afterwards and I want some cultural discussion...and I want the names of the foods that are being discussed."(Sims)

In order to use the videotape as an instructional tool to teach the culture, some professors would like to have the host spell out the cultural peculiarities that the story demonstrates.

> "I'd want something to say: 'In Africa, because of the extended family, a brother-in-law is expected to provide for his wife's family.'...If he'd just spell it out, because I think some might miss it."(Sims)

The student who was present stated that the culture was the best part of the videotape although he did admit to being somewhat overwhelmed by the abundance of cultural differences that were depicted.

> "The cultural thing was the best thing. That's the part I liked. I thought it was well presented but there's a lot, too much. I had a hard time....I didn't get it all together. It was a little too broken up for me."

HOST'S DELIVERY

The group was unanimous is their acceptance of the host.

> "He's cute."
>
> "He's dignified....He did the right things."
>
> "His voice is good. Not too fast."
>
> "Slight accent in English...It's nice."

The professors were asked if they thought the host's script was appropriate to the level of the students.

> "Its for a more advanced level."
>
> "I think it could be used at the beginning level."
>
> "I thought it was perfect."

TECHNICAL ASPECTS OF THE VIDEOTAPE

Since UDC was not able to provide a color monitor on the day of this evaluation, there were not many comments elicited from the professors regarding the technical quality of the WHMM footage. Their impressions from the black and white presentation of this footage were that it was adequate.

The blend of the narration with the African footage was perceived as excellent. It was felt that the switching from host to story livened the pace and would help keep the attention of the student.

Subtitles

This group found that the accent on the African footage did present a problem in spots. They would have liked to see subtitles throughout, at least when the accent was heavy and made comprehension difficult. One suggestion was made that the subtitles be shown only once for any given segment of the story that was used.

> "Have them (subtitles) first; and then later on take them away."
>
> "I would like to see them all the way through." (student)
>
> "The accent is hard to understand."

This group felt that the entire videotape should be transcribed.

> "With the script, if they had a hard time, they could follow."

Asked if they felt that having a transcript would impede successful improvements in the development of aural skills, the group implied that the teacher would be able to control this.

> "Not if they don't bring it to class. Study it before you come and leave it at home and close your book."
>
> "Some students really need that book in order to understand it."

INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNIQUES

The Accent

This group did not feel that the accent presented any particular disadvantages to using this as an instructional tool. They felt strongly and conveyed that this was actually a plus since they

wanted to prepare students for the real world.

> "If you show them the great quantitity of people who speak French in Africa, they have to accept it (the different accent) because people speak and people want to be understood."
>
> "I think that (when) learning a language, it's better to learn in different accents."
>
> "If you explain to the students how people happen to have different accents, from the example of the United States, they will understand and appreciate."
>
> "The goal is not for them to imitate the accent but to understand different accents...."

The Use of English and French

This group found no drawbacks in the use of English and French. Although the group had been told that this module was aimed at third and fourth year students of French, they were anxious to make it useful to all levels. Since they appeared to want to be able to use it on a beginning level as well, this may account for their lack of concern with the use of English.

> "Like they have it is fine especially toward the beginning. Maybe later on as it advances, they would need less."
>
> "If the student has his whole transcript in his book, the good student will learn that and come with his book closed, and that would be mastery, in my opinion."

Vocabulary

It was felt that the vocabulary could have been explored more.

> "You need more."

However, it was conceded that with good supporting materials, no more needed to be added to the videotape.

> "It depends on what you have in print. If you have a book that accompanies the tape...you don't even have to have it on the tape."

The point made by the student, who was in advanced French, was that the first set of vocaulary was too elementary. He would have liked to have seen greater emphasis placed on the African vocabulary. This point was well taken by everyone and invited comments from the professors.

"They could show the picture of the manioc...the clothes like the boubou, pagne."

They should explain that for the word "broussard", the milieu where they live is called the "brousse".

They wanted to see the vocabulary words used in a sentence or placed in context at the time of their presentation. This, it was felt would heighten comprehension and avoid confusion. One professor pointed out her confusion with the point that was being made with the words "etre gene" and "embarrasse". These words, she felt, were given too fast and out of context, creating possible confusion among the students.

Grammar

The first time the subject of grammar came up in the discussion, all of the professors saw the need to have some exercises on the screen so that grammar could be a part of the module.

"All that vocabulary and talk -- maybe we should put in some exercises."

"Maybe ten minutes of grammar."

"If you meet three times a week for lecture, and this is just something extra -- if you have a textbook that is different from the textbook of the tape, then we have to go through our textbooks and point out structures that are on the tape. We'd also look for idiomatic expressions. So it depends on how we use it...If its only supplementary, that's one thing....Sometimes we could ask the students to point out the idiomatic expressions that we have studied that week....I would prefer that the tape do this for us."

However, as the discussion progressed, and after the suggestion by the student that the grammar be incorporated in the print material, the group conceded that exercises could be separate from the videotape as long as there was adequate attention given to grammar in the print materials.

"If its an advanced conversational class, you don't need grammar....There's so much subject to talk about....A cultural type course, like Francophone Civilization, you could show it more for cultural information."

"I think it might make it a little too much. Because there is a lot in the culutral aspects, plus listening....You are learning a lot....It's not like you are using it for every single class. So I don't know if you would need that much grammar."

Testing Techniques

Some members of this group felt that the questions were too long and that inadequate time was given to the answer. They felt that the questions should be shorter but that there should be more of them.

> "Some of the questions were too long."
>
> "It's not so much understanding as it is remembering what is being asked."
>
> "I like the idea of going back to the scene (for answers). That was really good. But they were long sections...its hard to think."
>
> "Maybe shorter questions and shorter answers."
>
> "Long answers could be taken care of after the tape."

CULTURAL ELEMENTS

At least two professors felt that the difference between the city and the culture and the concept of the extended familiy should be emphasized more on the videotape.

> "The contrast between the city and the country. I think maybe emphasize it more because its so different, you know. Also, the extended family. It should be emphasized even more because one person works as a fonctionnaire and has to provide for so many."

Overall, however, it was agreed that additional work on the culture could be supplied by the teacher. It was implied that suggestions for reports, and recommendatons that the teacher make use of all students who had experienced Africa be included in the instructions to the teacher in the print materials.

> "Those (cultural elements) could be the reports that could be given to the student...they would do the research and come back to tell us....Or, if you have a native in the class who could elaborate for us -- whatever."

This group felt that the videotape offered a fair deptiction of what life is like in Africa. They would like to see additional modules using Koumba's story as a basis. The plot, it was felt, was very important to maintaining the students' interest. They would like to see a contrast and the conflicts that exist between a person who has lived in the city for many years and a person of the "brousse".

"Maybe another time they will show the city....I don't want to them to get the idea that Gabon is the 'brousse'."

"What I would like to see and what I noticed when I was in Africa -- some of the discussions among people in the city centered around -- if you live in the city, you're not going to get married and have as many children as they did (in the village) because its so expensive. So if you could see that kind of person, who's been in the city for a long time, and see how he clashes with the other idea....If we could see that -- the very modern and the very old, and the conflicts -- then, I think we'll understand."

INFUSION INTO THE CURRICULUM

The professors were asked how they would infuse the module into their curriculum.

"Definately supplementary. Core material? -- you'd have to add a text book....Like it is, I think its great as supplementary."

There had previously been some mention of cutting the videotape into two segments. This group was not adamant about changing the length although it was generally agreed that two shorter versions would be acceptable.

"If they have the transcript and the questions in advance, they can come to class with those already done. Which may or may not be a good thing because you wouldn't be testing their ability to answer on hearing. But if they came prepared by using the transcript, then the other twenty minutes could be used for discussion."

One professor suggested that in a conversation course, the module could be used over the course of two class periods, i.e., the first one to view the videotape and the following one could be used for discussion. An alternative method was to use it once in the classroom and then have the students view it again for homework.

One professor felt that the module would be most effectively used in a longer class. She stated that she would extend the class periods to up to 75 minutes and meet only twice a week.

"What we did with Zarabanda -- instead of meeting 3 times a week, we would meet twice for one hour and 15 minutes....If you only have 50 minutes, you don't have enough time."

PRINT MATERIALS

The group was asked how they would like the vocabulary to be presented and whether the words should be explained in French or in English.

> "If its for the teacher, it can be all in French. If its for the student, there has to be some English."
>
> "I think the teacher should be provided with everything, so that she has a copy of that."

None of the professors were very vocal about what should be included in the print materials.

> "They could be like the fill out the blank exercises, matching, true and false."

The group was probed for ideas on the layout of the print materials. No ideas were forthcoming but the suggestions of color coding and perforated pages were readily accepted.

WRAP UP

Finally, the group was asked to recommend a name for the series. The names that were given were:

> "Visages Africanines"
>
> "Images d'Afrique"
>
> "Images Culturels"
>
> "Les Deux Visages"
>
> "Les Deux Afriques"
>
> "Le Vrai Visage d'Afrique"
>
> "Cultures Af. icaines"
>
> "Visages d'Afrique"

The word "program" was favored over the word "module" because it was felt that "module" had been overused.

Before leaving, the professors suggested that the module be tested at Hampton Institute where the chairman of the department, Beatrice Carr, has developed a similar module. It was also suggested that Bannaker High School be used as a testing ground for this since this school attracted the best students of the city.

RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATIONS

HOST

1. Host should try to look more directly into the camera.
2. Shoot from more than one angle to give a more natural, less static look.
3. Adjust lighting so host can be more natural.
4. Host should speak in a more natural cadence in English.
5. Although professors found the pace in French to be adequate, producer should consider student's desire to hear French in a normal cadence, as epressed in the pre-production focus groups held with the students.

SUBTITLING

1. Subtitle all African footage that is not perfectly audible. This should be done for the first showing of a scene and not for a recap.
2. Subtitle the character's names at the time of their introduction.

BLEND OF PROGRAM ELEMENTS

1. Rearrange scenes so that Koumba meets the 'commis' in the beginning, before the story of the dowry begins. This is to establish Koumba's personality and his preference for the village early in the story.

INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNIQUES

1. Transcribe entire videotape for instructor and student use. Leave the teacher the option of supplying this to the students.

(Testing)

2. Make questions and answers shorter and more direct. Provide answers in similar words to those used on the videotape.
3. Add a few questions to the videotape.
4. Include additional questions in the print material.

(English and French Usage)

5. Professors were very close to equally divided on the subject of using English and French in the videotape. It can be concluded that both factions could be satisfied with the introduction in English and the rest in French.

   The vocabulary is an exception. It was agreed that the words should be accompanied by pictures when possible to aid the students' comprehension. Very simple French should be used to convey conceptual words. However, this author feels that English explanations of the more difficult words would be acceptable to most of the professors.

(Vocabulary)

6. Explain and elaborate more on the vocabulary. With "arriere-grand-pere", for example, continue with other related words that explain family relationships. The same should be done for words related to food.

7. Provide pictures for some of the words to avoid having to explain them in English and to increase the use of the visual teaching technique. The amount of time alloted to the presentation of the vocabulary should not, however, be augmented.

8. Provide more in the way of African words, such as "igname," " boubou," etc. Use these words and others related to the culture to further both vocabulary and culture.

9. Include an extensive vocabulary list in the print materials.

CULTURAL ELEMENTS

1. Explain the culture more extensively in the narration, keeping the narration concise, however, to avoid lengthening the videotape.

2. Mention the greetings that are made (kissing cheeks, etc.)

3. Emphasize that this is Gabonese culture, and while there are many similarities throughout Africa, it cannot be concluded that these customs are true for all African countries.

4. Explain the concept of the extented family.

5. Empahsize the difference between the city and the country.

6. Explain that this is a story of a fictional family and that the conduct displayed by the in-laws is not true for every Gabonese family.

(Accent)

7. Emphasize the fact that there are many accents in Africa just as they are in the United States. Mention that the accent on the videotape is Gabonese, not "African."

8. Produce one or two more modules from the Koumba series to: (1) show what happens to Koumba when he goes to the city, and (2) allow more time to elaborate on the differences in culture between the city and the rural areas.

INFUSION INTO THE CURRICULUM

1. Cut module into two 10-15 minute segements.

2. Make suggestions for use in the laboratory or class.

APPENDIX

MODERATOR'S GUIDE
Faculty Evaluation of Videotape
African Videotape Project

I. Introduction

- personal introduction
- project introduction

VIEW VIDEOTAPE PASS OUT QUESTIONNAIRE

II. General Appeal of Videotape

A. Overall Reaction

1. What do you think of the videotape?
   o eye appeal
   o as an instructional tool

B. Narration/Host

1. What did you think about the tone of the narration?
   Probe

2. What did you think about the host's delivery and on-camera presence?
   Probe: What did you like, dislike

3. What did you think of the setting for the narrator?
   Probe: What did you like, dislike

4. What changes would you have made in the narrated section?

II. Technical Aspects of the Videotape

A. Quality and Composition

1. What do you think about the overall technical quality of the production (those parts produced by WHMM)

2. What do you think of the blend of the different program elements?

o frequency of appearance of narrator

o story cuts

o titling (vocab. words, cue cards)

3. What about the subtitling?

o consistancy of use

o frequency of use

o necessity of

III. Instructional Techniques

A. What do you think about the use of both English and French?

B. Do you think enough vocabulary was highlighted?

1.What other words, expressions would you highlight?

C. What gramatical concepts, if any, would you have pointed out?

D. What do you think of the testing techniques that were used? (quiz, recapping)

1. What else should be tested?

2. Is the testing overdone?

3. Are the questions challenging enough for the target levels?

III. Cultural Elements

A. Are the cultural aspects of the story adequately emphasized?

1. Which should be better explained?

2. Which would you add?

B. Do you think it is important for your students to become accustomed to the African accent?

1. What will be their reaction/

2. Was the difference in accents adequately emphasized?

C. Would you like to see additional modules using Koumba's story as the basis?

IV. Infusion Into the Curriculum

A. How would you fit it in? Probe: length

B. Of those who teach on levels one and two, would you use this videotape? How?

V. Print Material

A. How would you LAYOUT the print materials.

- o color coding
- o perforated pages
- o indexing and cross referencing
- o tabs
- o loose leaf

B. How would you present VOCABULARY in the print materials?

1. presentation?
2. Should there be a distinction between the vocabulary on the screen and additional vocab?
3. types of exercises? How extensively?
   - o matching, multiple choice, true/false, substitution

C. How would you present GRAMMAR in the print materials?

D. What CULTURAL ACTIVITIES would you recommend be included in the suggestions to the teacher?

E. Would you like to have the entire videotape TRANSCRIBED for your use?

F. Should the print material be in French or English exclusively or mixed?

V. Wrap-up

A. What is the most positive aspect of the module?

B. What would you like to see improved most in the module?

1. Would you use it as it is?

C. Should the host refer to this production as a program or a module?

D. What would be a good name for the series?

APPENDIX C

List of Television Programs Received

LIST OF TELEVISION PROGRAMS

FROM

GABON AND IVORY COAST

GABON

"Where Are You Going, Koumba?" (Dramatic serial)

"The Wayward Boat" (Theatrical Drama)

"The Sculpter" (Interview)

Public Service Announcements

IVORY COAST

Economic Series: Tourism

Literary SEries: Tribute to Mariama Ba

Economic Series: The Great Departure

Economic Series: Serge Guetta on the World Bank

Documentary Series: Images of Ivory Coast; MOdern Life

Docmentary Series: Man and the Arts: The Baule People and Undercover

Theatrical Plays "His Excellency's Special Train"

"Adama, Champion"

Public Affairs Program

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APPENDIX D

Overview of Tapes and Guide

IMAGES D'AFRIQUE

Teacher's Guide

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I. INTRODUCTION TO THE SERIES

The IMAGES D'AFRIQUE series developed by the Department of Romance Languages at Howard University, represents a new and unique concept in audio-visual instruction for the language classroom. The series consists of seven half-hour videotapes and accompanying print materials based on television programming produced by French-speaking nations of West and Central Africa. The series is designed as supplementary material for intermediate and advanced French courses at the university level. However, because of the wealth of cultural information included, it may also be used for courses on intercultural studies, and seminars on cross-cultural communication.

The uniqueness of the series lies in the fact that the core programs were originally produced by and for French-speakers and thus include language and cultural reference points common to a French-speaking audience. Students have the advantage of hearing the language as it is naturally used and not in a context where it has been specially adapted for them. The use of television programming from French-speaking Africa also conveys the message that French is widely spoken outside of France and may encourage students to see a major in French as useful in combination with such disciplines as business, law and/or international relations.

Objectives

The objectives of the IMAGES D'AFRIQUE series are to:

(1) Improve the vocabulary, listening comprehension and speaking skills of intermediate and advanced university French students;

(2) Acquaint intermediate and advanced students of French with the culture of selected nations of French-speaking West and Central Africa;

(3) Accustom students to the variety of French accents heard in various French speaking countries of Africa; and,

(4) Introduce an innovative use of video into the language-learning classroom.

II. DESIGN OF THE SERIES

The IMAGES D'AFRIQUE series is comprised of three units containing a total of seven modules. Unit A contains four modules; Unit B, two modules, and Unit C, one module. Each module consists of a videotape of approximately 30 minutes in length, and accompanying print materials from the Teacher's Guide. Unit A focuses on a dramatic serial from Gabon; Unit B depicts a play from the Ivory Coast, set in Cameroun; and Unit C focuses on a talk show and commercials from the Ivory Coast.

A. Features of the Videotapes

The videotapes range from 27 to 37 minutes in length and contain the following features:

Series Opening — The opening segment used for all modules begins with a map of Africa highlighting the French-speaking nations followed by scenes depicting traditional and modern Africa. The scenes are drawn from television programs from the Ivory Coast and films and videotapes from the World Bank and USAID.

Series Host/Narrator — The series is hosted and narrated by Dr. Keith Q. Warner, Chairman of the Department of Romance Languages at Howard University. Narrating in both French and English, Dr. Warner provides cultural information, elaborates on what has been said and gives clues on the story line to reinforce the viewer's understanding of the story.

Introduction of Characters/Recaps — At the beginning of each module, the principal characters appearing in the episode are introduced, or the events of the previous episode are recapped.

Demographic Information — The first module in each unit provides demographic information on the target country that is the focus of the program. Unit A introduces Gabon; Unit B Cameroun; and Unit C, the Ivory Coast. Two maps are shown: the first is a full map of Africa highlighting the portion which the country occupies, and the second is a map of the country itself. Narration by the host provides additional information on history, natural resources, and land area and languages.

Cultural Information — Cultural information about the customs, traditions and lifestyles of the people are provided at various points throughout the videotape by the host and supported at times by slides or scenes from the episode. The wrap-up scene at the end of each episode highlights one or two of the cultural points brought out in the story.

Vocabulary Study — Vocabulary drawn from the dialog of the episode is presented near the beginning of the episode. (In Unit A, modules 1

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and 4 and Unit B, module 1 vocabulary is presented twice). Approximately six to eight words are given at a time and appear on screen as the narrator gives the definition in English. Sentences in which the word is used appear on screen and are simultaneously stated by the narrator. The sentences reflect information about the culture and details from the story.

Accent Study

Once during each episode, the speech of one character is studied intensively to enable listeners to become more familiar with the accent. A portion of the dialog just heard is recapped and each sentence is heard once again in isolation and immediately repeated by the narrator. (In unit A, module I the narrator also translates the sentences).

Content Questions and Story Recap

At the end of each episode, three or four content questions designed to test viewers' understanding of the module are posed. The question appears on screen and is simultaneously stated by the narrator. Then, the portion of the story providing the answer is recapped briefly and the question re-appears on screen with a request for an answer. At this point a beep is heard, indicating to the teacher that the videotape should be put on "Pause" so that answers can be given either verbally or in writing. (Unit A, module 1 is the only module that does not contain beeps. Instead, it allows 20 seconds after each question for a response).

Subtitles
(Ou vas-tu Koumba? only)

Because the dialog moves rapidly at times and because the French used by some of the older characters is less than grammatical, subtitles in French will appear on screen at selected points to aid understanding.

B. Features of the Teacher's Guide

The Guide is divided into seven chapters, each corresponding to one episode on videotape. Each chapter contains exercises and information drawn from the episode. In addition, the dialog, content questions and answers from the videotape are contained in the appendix to the Guide. The guide has been bound in such a way as to facilitate photocopying of materials

for distribution to students. Each chapter is organized in the followin manner.

A. TEACHER MATERIALS

1. Statement of Objectives

2. Synopsis of Story

3. Cultural Notes

B. STUDENT MATERIALS

1. Pre-screening Study Sheets.

   a. Vocabulary

   b. Cultural Reference Sheet

2. Post-viewing Exercises

   a. Comprehension

   b. Vocabulary
   c. Situations Orales et Ecrites

3. Quizzes

   a. Comprehension

   b. Vocabulary.

C. APPENDICES

1. Keys to objective exercises

2. Transcriptions of Dialog, Questions and Answers from the videotapes.

III. USING THE SERIES

A. The Units

The units are sequenced in increasing levels of difficulty. Unit A is intermediate; Unit B is intermediate-advanced; and Unit C is advanced. If at all possible, instructors should begin with Unit A and work their way through to Unit C. Although the series is divided up into units, each of the modules in a given unit is self-contained and forms the basis of an entire lesson.

B. The Teacher's Guide

The materials in the guide are designed to encourage the use of spoken French in the intermediate and advanced French class. In order to maintain the focus on improving students' listening comprehension and speaking competency, it is preferable that they be given only those materials listed

under Student Materials in the outline above. The Synopsis and the Cultural Notes are not to be transformed into "reading" texts in the traditional manner but should assist the teacher in explaining those points essential to the students' understanding in the context of classroom discussion after the students have viewed the tape at least once in class. Students are then encouraged to ask questions and to take notes (in French). They should also view the tapes several times outiside of classes. Much vocabulary is given to aid them in formulating their ideas. The comprehension questions and the exercises reinforce the elements students need in order to perform the activities suggested in the "Situations Orales et Ecrites". Their performance in these activities may be the basis of the teachers evaluation or may be used in conjunction with the comprehenision and vocabulary quizzes at the end of each module.

C. Instruction Plan

The instruction plan has been designed to enable each module to be used over a three day period. The first day includes the distribution of lists of the vocabulary taken from the episode. The second day involves the screening of the videotape, some in-class exercises and homework. The third day is designed for a review of the exercises and a re-screening of the videotape if necessary.

1. Preparing for Module Presentation

Begin by reviewing general information given in the guide and the chapter which corresponds to the videotape to be shown. Also, you may wish to look over the dialog, content questions and answers contained in the appendix. Try to screen the program before viewing it with your class. Duplicate the student viewing sheets for distribution at the appropriate times.

2. Activities

DAY 1

1. Introduce the module and explain the objectives to be stressed. Point out that the accent will be on vocabulary building, cultural enrichment, and improved speaking and listening competence.

2. Distribute vocabulary lists from the Pre-screening Study Sheets. Have students pronounce the words and use them in sentences according to the definitions given. Also distribute Cultural References Sheet.

DAY 2

1. Distribute Post Viewing Exercises (Comprehension Exercises, Vocabulary Exercises", Situations Orales et Ecrites). Indicate how the students are to use these sheets.

2. View Tape. NOTE: The beep heard after each content question is a signal for the teacher to stop/pause the tape so that the

students may give their own responses before seeing the taped response.

3. Discuss tape using comprehension exercises from guide. If necessary the teacher may present orally for clarification or for cultural enrichment information from the synopsis and/or the cultural notes. However, it is preferable that the students have access to the tape for additional viewing outside class in order to increase their listening comprehension.

4. Assignments

a. Students should view tape outside class and complete the worksheets.

b. Assign students to groups for preparation and practice of skits, debates, etc. outlined in the "Situations Orales et Ecrites".

DAY 3

1. Collect or correct homework to reinforce mastery of cultural material and vocabulary.

2. Presentation of skits, debates etc.

3. Have students do the "Quizzes".

IV. OVERVIEW OF UNITS

A. Unit A: Ou vas-tu Koumba? (Intermediate)

Unit A contains four episodes from the OU VAS-TU KOUMBA? series produced by the television broadcasting system of Gabon. OU VAS-TU KOUMBA is a dramatic serial filmed in black and white which was completed in the late 1970's and is still seen on television in Gabon. In filming the series, the producers used actors from the Théâtre National Gabonais (TNG) for the principal roles, but used local people for supporting roles. This combination of profesional and non-professional actors lends an air of authenticity to the series.

OU VAS-TU KOUMBA? is the story of a young Gabonese man who is forced to leave his small village and go to the big city to earn money to pay off a family debt. As the series follows him in his travels from rural Gabon to the big city, various themes of importance to Gabon, and other francophone african nations are emphasized. Through Koumba, we gain insight into the culture and lifestyle of this African nation as it grapples with the problems of nation-building, ethnocentrism and urbanization. The original series contained more than 10 episodes. However, these episodes have been condensed for the purposes of classroom instruction. Here is a brief description of the story line from the OU VAS-TU KOUMBA? modules:

MODULE I

We are introduced to Koumba and his family. We see the problem of the dowry develop which will later compel Koumba to leave his village. The lifestyle in the village is highlighted and the differences between rural and urban life are brought out in a conversation between Koumba and a visiting city worker.

MODULE 2

Koumba's family is forced to appear at a hearing to reply to the accusations of their son-in-law who claims that they should reimburse him for his dowry. The judgement goes against the family, and Koumba must journey to Port-Gentil to earn enough money to pay off the debt. He travels as far as Fougamou where he stops for a while and is witness to the problems of interethnic rivalry faced by a teacher recently transferred there. The episode ends with Koumba learning about the concept of nationhood and the responsibilities of citizenship.

MODULE 3

Koumba finally arrives in Port-Gentil, the main port city of Gabon. He runs across Martin, a village friend who offers him lodging with his brother. The difficulties of finding employment in the city are brought out as well as the impact of urbanization on the Gabonese family. Koumba is disturbed to

find out that his primary school diploma doesn't count for much in the job market, and he finally accepts employment as a dock worker. At the end of the episode, Koumba receives a promotion and is well on his way to earning the money needed to pay off the family debt.

MODULE 4

This episode focuses on Otambo, the oldest son of Martin, Koumba's friend from the village. Neglected by his father and mistreated by his stepmother, Otambo turns to a life of crime. He is taken to jail and then brought before the District Attorney who places Otambo in his parents' custody. The problems of juvenile delinquency and the need for rehabilitation and parental guidance are stressed.

UNIT B: Le Train Spécial de Son Excellence (Intermediate-Advanced)

Unit B contains two modules adapted from the stage play, LE TRAIN SPECIAL DE SON EXCELLENCE, written by Guillaume Oyono M'Bia. The play was part of the "Théâtre chez Nous" series produced by the RTI (Radiodifussion et Télévision Ivoirienne). Although it was produced in Ivory Coast for Iviorian audiences, the play is actually set in modern day Cameroon. The actors are professionals from the Institut des Arts d'Abidjan. LE TRAIN SPECIAL DE SON EXCELLENCE is a comedy-drama which takes a humorous, yet serious, look at the values of people living in a small town in Cameroon. Through the plot, which revolves around the efforts of the townspeople to impress a visiting dignitary, we see a

society greatly influenced by western values and materialism. Here is a brief description of the two modules.

MODULE 1

The action takes place in the bar of Missamayonga, a local resident in a small town located not too far from Yaoundé. The discussion moves from the role of women in the society to the news that a rich dignitary is in the area to pay a visit to the parents of his girlfriend. The men in the bar become excited in anticipation of wealth and prosperity which may be brought to the region. The stationmaster, the town's only civil servant, is convinced by Missamayonga and the others that if he beautifies the train station the dignitary will speak well of the town to the high officials in Yaoundé.

MODULE 2

The stationmaster forces the passengers to clean and paint the train station in anticipation of the dignitary's arrival. The dignitary arrives with his girlfriend and her family as various themes regarding modernization and western lifestyles are emphasized. The stationmaster falls all over himself in his attempts to impress the dignitary. After he departs, the stationmaster receives a call from officials at the next station informing him that the real dignitary is on his way but will not make a stop at this station. The stationmaster is so disappointed he cries.

C. UNIT C: Table Ronde (Advanced)

Unit C contains one module which includes excerpts from a talk show and selected commercials from the Ivory Coast. The program was produced in 1981 by the RTI. The commercials were produced by the Ivorian Publicity Bureau.

MODULE 1

The module gives an overview of television in the Ivory Coast and highlights the impact of the medium on this developing country. Five discussants, including the two co-hosts, a well-educated woman, a police commissioner and a monsignor discuss the following topics: the impact of imported programs, the extent to which television promotes violence, the need for greater parental guidance in television viewing and the choices facing Ivory Coast as it becomes more a part of the world communication structure. The commercials include the Ivoirian equivalent of a 'Close-up" toothpaste commercial and advertisements for beauty products.

UNIT A

MODULE I

OU VAS-TU, KOUMBA?

OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this module, students should be able to:

1. Locate and identify Gabon and its principal cities on a map of Africa.
2. Answer questions in French about aspects of Gabonese culture.
3. Pronounce the new vocabulary.
4. Use the new vocabulary in sentences.
5. Summarize the story in French, in their own words.
6. "Act out" selected scenes from the story.